

CHAMBERS'S JOURNAL

OF
POPULAR

LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND ART.

Fourth Series

CONDUCTED BY WILLIAM AND ROBERT CHAMBERS.

No. 160.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 19, 1867.

PRICE 1½d.

BETWEEN TWO FIRES.

It has been found by observation that, as we descend in a deep mine, the temperature increases. It appears that below a certain point the heat of summer and the cold of winter do not penetrate, but one temperature prevails from year to year. Below this point, the temperature constantly rises as we descend as much as one degree of the thermometer in sixty feet; while at a depth of about ten thousand feet, it is calculated that the heat would be equal to that of boiling water. Hot springs and volcanoes prove in the same way that there is great heat in the interior of our globe; but the strongest proof arises from the quantity of matter therein. This can be, and has been, measured with the greatest accuracy by means of the pendulum and other contrivances. It is found that the amount of matter in the earth is about twice as much as would be in a solid globe of granite of the same size—of granite such as we find at the surface of the earth.

A piece of granite appears at first sight to be amongst the hardest substances we meet with. If, however, we take a small sphere of granite, and strike it violently against a blackened anvil, we shall find that on the sphere of granite there will not merely be a black dot, marking the point where the sphere met the anvil, but a small black circular mark, shewing that the round granite ball had flattened itself against the anvil. Thus we see that the force of the blow has compressed the granite; and if that force had been continued, the granite would have remained in smaller compass. Now, when we consider the enormous pressure there will be on the interior parts of our globe, owing to the weight of the upper parts, it is easy to see that, even if of granite (and we have reason to believe that granite is the chief material), they will be pressed into much smaller space than they would occupy on the surface: so the amount of matter in a cubic foot at the centre of our globe will be many times as great as in a cubic foot at the surface. Now, we know the size of our globe, and calculating how the weight of each part compresses that

which is below it, we find that the amount of matter in our globe will be much more than twice that in a sphere of granite of the same size. There must, then, be something which prevents the interior parts being condensed so much as they otherwise would be, by the pressure upon them. Now, the only power that we know which could effect this is heat; and a sufficient heat, by its tendency to expand, would sufficiently counteract the compression produced by the superincumbent weight. We are thus led to believe that the interior of our globe is at a very high temperature.

From what we have said, it is plain that at no very great depth the heat must be sufficient to melt the hardest rock. Here we are met with a difficulty. It has been shewn from researches on the precession of the equinoxes that the solid crust of the earth must be several hundred miles thick—not far short, possibly, of a thousand miles. The solution of the difficulty, however, is this. If we heat water in the open air, we find that we cannot raise it to a higher temperature than 212 degrees, as it then passes away in steam. If, however, we place it in a strong closed vessel, we may heat it to a much higher temperature, and it will still retain its fluid form. Thus, at no great depth below the surface of the earth, the rocks are at such a temperature that they would be in a fluid state if the pressure were only that of the atmosphere, but the great pressure of the rocks above keeps them in a solid state. If, as in a volcano, any outlet be given to them, they immediately liquefy, and flow forth; just as the water heated in the closed vessel will explode into steam when the vessel is broken.

Thus, by the pressure, the crust of the earth is kept solid to a great depth. We can easily see that it must be so, from the existence of such masses as the Himalaya and the Andes, which, were the solid crust of the earth of a comparatively trifling thickness, would sink through it, as one sinks through the moss that covers the mountain bog.

Now, heat is but slowly transmitted by some bodies. The outer crust of the earth, composed of various substances arranged very irregularly,

allows the central heat to escape but very gradually. Were the crust composed of iron, the escape of heat would be much more rapid. As it is, owing to the nature of the surface of our globe, the substitution of a mass of ice for the glowing interior would not sensibly lower the temperature on the surface. But it is not so with all bodies. The sun, that reservoir of enormous heat (enormous indeed, since we see that it so expands his vast bulk that its density is but a quarter that of the earth), by some internal constitution, and probably in part through his wonderful atmosphere, transmits his heat rapidly in all directions. Were the earth and the sun constituted alike, the smaller bulk of the earth would cool down long ere the sun had dissipated his heat. The central heat of the earth, however, is as important in its way for the existence of life upon it, as the sun's light and heat; so, by a wonderful arrangement of the surface, its escape is rendered as slow as possible. It is thus probable that the heat of the sun will not outlast the cooling down of our globe. Between these two fires, the solar and the terrestrial, man's life is, as it were, balanced. The sun as the source of labour we all regard, but the heat of the earth does not come so prominently into view. It will be our aim to treat of it now.

The sun's influence on the organised world is life-sustaining. In a sense, it may be called destructive to the inanimate world. 'The waters wear the stones,' and it is the sun that furnishes arms for the contest. Every raindrop that falls wastes the wearied earth, and every wave that beats our coasts carries some trophies back with it to the abyss. Let any one go to some granite coast, and mark the wasted pinnacles and hollowed clefts, and doubt, if he can, who will be the victor. Nor is the power of the sea less shewn on some low-lying coast, where, as if in mockery, he presents mankind with some miles of sandy barrenness, even that gift to be reclaimed in his first angry mood. The action of the sea will wash away every spot where life can rest, such power do its sun-born currents possess. But here the use of the central heat is seen. By the successive expansion of different portions of the crust of the earth, successive portions of land are raised above the sea for life to rest upon. How this takes place, it is not easy to see. We do not know much of the rate with which the heat of the earth travels through the various rocks; that, however, heat acting on large masses of rock previously at a low temperature, would expand them sufficiently to produce the high lands of the earth, seems probable. If we imagine a deep sea gradually filled up with the *débris* of surrounding lands, the strata thus produced will be compacted and at a low temperature. The water, being a good abstractor of heat, would have reduced the portion of the crust beneath it to a lower temperature than that of the surrounding parts. There would be, as it were, a depression in the heated crust filled in with cold material. By degrees, the heat would spread into this, expanding it, and gradually raising the surface above the sea. At the same time, the surfaces of other masses of land, previously above the water, have been washed away, and in consequence, their heated and expanded foundations lose their heat, and contract—the whole mass thus sinking deeper below the sea.

Such a process probably produces continents and large masses of land. Bays, gulfs, inland seas, and islands will often be due to minor depressions and elevations of a more local nature, though in most

cases they are the results of the action of the sea and rain upon such continental masses.

The parts between these two masses of rock—the one expanding and the other contracting—will necessarily be fractured and contorted. Into the chasms and fissures thus formed, the waters of the sea descend, and in their windings battle with the fire. The volcano and the earthquake are but the side-blows of this terrible conflict. Vast caves with walls glowing more brightly than the noon-day sun—water white-hot, that it dulls not their dazzling purity, ever and anon flashing into vapour, and driving all before it with irresistible might—But man cannot conceive of the conflict.

We do not know much of the constitution of the sun's surface. It is possible that, as by the fusee of a watch, an equable motion is maintained by a varying power, so, by some arrangement, the heat of the sun is given out equably, and will not vary sensibly in quantity as the amount of heat in the sun diminishes. It is, however, at least probable that the heat given out by the sun is constantly diminishing, though but very gradually, and imperceptibly in the ages that man has inhabited our world. Sirius was known to the ancients as a red star, while to us it is conspicuous for its clear, pure brightness. Other stars, too, have faded from their former splendour. We can, then, well conceive of the sun, as one of the stars, gradually decreasing in splendour through the course of ages. His influence on the earth was formerly greater than now, and in like manner the earth, formerly less cooled down than at present, had an energy of convulsion that now we see not. We have been shewn the forces still at work on our earth, and assured that none greater have ever acted there; but the inevitable course of nature teaches us otherwise. Every volcanic outburst dissipates some of the central heat, and we must add to what is now, what must have been spent in former ages, to obtain a correct idea of the forces of former ages. With a fiercer central heat, the actual manifestations of it, arising from its disturbance, must have been greater: continents raised with more sudden upheaval than now, and again devoured more speedily by a more raging sea; fiercer storms of rain deluging the plains, and furrowing with deeper clefts vaster lava-streams than Hecla or Etna now pour forth; a hotter sun and more steamy air nurturing forests compared with which the woods of the Amazon appear but a slow and feeble growth. We cannot but think those in error who assure us that what is always has been, and that the phenomena of nature were never of a fiercer character than now. No; it is for us to admire the Eternal Wisdom guiding the course of His works, supplying to each age the life most suited to it, and at last, when the times were ready, placing man on no new unseasoned world.

Again, in this gradual process of heat collected in two centres, the sun and the earth, gradually dissipating itself through space, and in so doing, maintaining the organisations of life, it is easy to see that the greater violence of its earlier periods, and the languor of its latter ones, render but a certain portion of the duration of this process suitable for the existence of man. That this may be long, the whole duration must be immense. We thus see the meaning of the vast geological ages—they are but, as it were, the root, the stalk,

the leaves. This age is the fruit, surpassed in magnitude by the others, but their crown and glory, without which they are nothing, and in which they have a great purpose and meaning.

But while we gaze backwards into bygone ages, we cannot but also turn an eye to that which is to come. Science gives but a dreary prospect: the sun waxing dull—the earth's rich plains no longer renewed by the central upheaving fire—the materials of life continually diminishing—everything sinking to an arctic night. But we have a brighter future revealed. The harvest of existence shall not be left in the fields where it grew, to rot and mildew away under November rains; but ere the bright sun of its summer has departed, it shall be reaped and gathered into the Eternal Storehouses.

A SHOT IN THE SCRUB.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

MY spirits rose when I heard that the station to which I was about to be sent was called 'Kelvin Grove.' I had an idea, entirely derived from poetical sources, and quite unjustified by the facts, as any one who has ever explored the original locality in its present condition is qualified to testify, that Kelvin Grove was a kind of earthly Paradise, intended for the sole occupation of happy lovers. Probably it was a pretty place before it abounded in sludge and coal-dust, as it abounds at present; but I thought of it then as I thought of the 'chainless Guadalquivir,' which I have since learned is a muddy channel, and of 'Bendemeer's stream,' which is a dirty ditch, crossed, by the adventurous traveller who lives to get there, on a plank, and within a hundred miles of whose ill-smelling dribble a nightingale never was heard, nor a rose heard of. I did not expect to find exactly the same kind of romantic beauty in the wilds of the Tasmanian bush, with which my fond fancy had invested the Kelvin Grove of Scotland; but the name sounded home-like, and it influenced me. It was not the roughness of the new life in the New World that I minded: it was its loneliness. I was banished, not because I had been guilty indeed, but because I had been foolish, and I was home-sick very often; and the fortune which was to 'make things comfortable,' reconcile my offended family to my existence, and the equally offended but infinitely more unpleasant family of my pretty Kate O'Hara to the melancholy fact of our engagement and our hopeless constancy, was very long in coming. Fortunes were not made in those days by the expeditious method of digging them out of the ground; the unsuspected gold slumbered in the earth, watched by the stealthy gnomes, and no traitorous whisper of malignant spirit had bidden men to invade their territory. Very hard work and very small gain had been my lot since I had 'come out' to Tasmania, with a scanty supply of ready money, only to be drawn on in case of necessity, but with a large stock of penitence, resolution, and I think I may fairly say, looking back through a long vista of years, honest courage and industry. Why did I not employ these qualities at home? They are at least as efficient in Ireland as in Tasmania. Very true; but then, somehow, I think they only sprang into vigorous life under the smile of Kate O'Hara, and

I had had time for plenty of folly before that smile shone upon me. At all events, it was always shining now, though her face was thousands of miles away; and when I was riding through the gullies and over the plains to Kelvin Grove, thinking of her, and guiding myself by the sun, she was sleeping in old Ireland, and dreaming of me, while no light but the moon's was shining, and no one was out but the fairies.

'It must be a beautiful place,' I thought, 'or Jack Maclellan would not have called it Kelvin Grove;' and I rode with a light heart across the grass-plains, and through the irregular groups of brown-leaved trees, whose sombre changelessness is at first so oppressive to the eyes accustomed to the luxuriant verdure and the gaunt nudity, between which conditions the forest lords in Europe alternate. A long, lonely, but not dreary march was that which brought me to my new home and my new employment. The emu and the kangaroo, scarce now, but then flourishing in aboriginal abundance, frequently, and with contemptuous indifference, crossed my path. I had no companion; I had no fear. I was to find sharers in my toils at Kelvin Grove; among them a man who had been there with Jack Maclellan, and concerning whom I felt some natural curiosity. I journeyed on without meeting with any adventure, danger, or mischance, picturing to my imagination the features of the place which I was compelled to call, and determined to regard as *home*.

I was not under any delusions as to the sort of life I was to lead there; I had had some experience of the nature of the occupation I had undertaken, and I knew that the sublime and beautiful were not among the components of a stockman's existence. I had a stated interest in the numerous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep which roved in a half-wild state over many miles of the surrounding country, and to which I was about to act as stock-keeper—a kind of colonial head-shepherd. As I neared my destination, I began to experience some misgivings relative to the accuracy of my air-drawn picture; and on my arrival, I discovered that all that was in the name of Kelvin Grove was utter disenchantment. For the beauty of the silvan grove, I saw the bleak gloom of a small dark dell, surrounded by rugged hills, which somehow contrived to be completely unpicturesque; beyond which stretched a ragged, jagged, irregular, brownish forest, unsuggestive of glades, and merely heavy and depressing. Something harsh, arid, niggardly was in the aspect of the place: it was impossible to imagine any one growing rich or being happy there. A gloom like that of the Shades dwelt upon the scene, and my heart fell all the more quickly and thoroughly for the fancies of verdant slopes and limpid streams I had been cherishing.

'What a fool Jack must be, or how uncommonly fond of a bad joke,' I thought, as I caught my first sight of the long, low, miserable-looking log-house, surrounded by a stout stockade, and whose dead, uninteresting level front was diversified by two windows, roughly glazed, which did not match, and two unpainted doors, now lying open, placed side by side in what seemed to me an unmeaning fashion. I had yet to discover that the 'placid river-side' of the original Kelvin was here represented by an unprotected stagnant well, the only trace of water within miles; and the 'fairies' by numerous noxious reptiles, and notably by serpents of a peculiarly

venomous species. I learned these agreeable facts the morning after my arrival, and also got an insight into the prospects of conviviality awaiting me from Bristol, who informed me that our nearest neighbour resided at a station just thirty miles (uncleared) from Kelvin Grove.

There was no help for it, however: the cattle and sheep were realities, the pasturage was good, and I 'brought a stout heart to a steep hill.' Our little company consisted of myself, Bristol, and two other convict-servants, holding tickets-of-leave. Of these, Bristol was the most remarkable, the only one I need describe. He was a middle-aged man, short, thick-set, powerfully built, with a shock head of rough red hair, a pair of keen, small, round gray eyes, and a whimsical expression of countenance, which made his blank, whitish complexion, thickly pitted with small-pox, seem like an intentional joke rather than a natural misfortune. A cheerful, useful, handy, ready fellow was Bristol, who derived his *sobriquet* from the Bristol riots, for his active participation in which he had been transported. My first impression of Bristol was a negative one. 'You don't look like a ruffian,' I thought: 'I can't fancy you smashing windows, setting fire to houses, and heading a mob.' He had a quiet, lounging sort of way with him, but he did his work well; and I very soon found out that when the convict was trusted, he was trustworthy. I had been long enough in a convict settlement, before I embarked in the speculation which brought me to Kelvin Grove, to have gotten over the first instinctive repulsion which is caused by contact with acknowledged criminals; and on the whole, I decidedly liked Bristol, and we worked very amicably together. My good opinion of him was confirmed by the dumb testimony of the dogs Battle and Bang, who declared for him at once, and swore, in their unmistakable fashion, eternal friendship. Not even Bristol could make Kelvin Grove anything but a dreary abode; but his cheerfulness, his readiness, and the alacrity and intelligence with which he served me in the united, though dissimilar capacities of groom, gardener, housemaid, cook, and valet, much alleviated the gloom of my existence. The man possessed one, at least, of the attributes of genius, a ready adaptability to all kinds of occupation and every variety of circumstances. Physically, he was admirably suited to the avocation which we followed in company, for I never met a bolder or more skilful horseman, or a man gifted with keener or more untiring eyesight. The value of these qualities will be evident at a glance, when the nature of a stock-keeper's employment is taken into consideration, and it is borne in mind that he is a kind of equestrian explorer of unknown regions, and called upon, in the ordinary course of his business, to perform feats which would be esteemed as prodigious anywhere but in the bush.

A stock-keeper may be said to live in his saddle, in a perpetual condition of hunting, assisted by his tailless dogs. In what region of his wide domain he may find himself at nightfall, is entirely a matter of chance, dependent on the caprice of the erratic brutes which constitute his charge, his fortune, and his future. Solitude is usually his lot, but solitude uncombined with repose, restless, and toilsome. It is a hard life for men of education in its monotony and its sordid cares; and the absence of all associations, which is one of the

characteristics of a new country, a land without a history, has a terribly depressing effect upon the mind. A man of education in such a position is, however, the exception, not the rule. My nearest neighbour was a perfect example of 'the right man in the right place,' a stock-keeper, to whom every conceivable feat of bushriding was familiar, who had passed fifteen years of his life in the society of cattle and sheep, and who, with his horse and his dog, was as characteristic a type as Robinson Crusoe with his parrot and his umbrella. He was a stern, dark, sturdy man, keen and selfish, but a good neighbour (at thirty miles), and very useful to me and Bristol. I never learned anything of his history previous to his arrival in Tasmania, or heard him mention the name of any relative, friend, or place in the old country. He was the impersonation of energy, strength, and contentment; though whether he fixed all his happiness in the present, or indulged in aspirations, towards whose fulfilment that present was leading him, I never knew. It has often struck me, since Jim George, Kelvin Grove, and the colony itself have ceased to be aught but distant memories to me, that there must have been great force of character, and a most determined power of reticence in a man who, having but two associates in the midst of such a wilderness, kept them to the end in complete ignorance of everything concerning him which was not within the range of their own observation. The perfect harmony between Jim George and the scene, the easy superiority over us given him by his acquaintance with the country, and his entire satisfaction with his occupation, made him an important personage in our eyes; and we hailed his tolerably frequent visits with pleasure, and availed ourselves of them to procure his guidance in exploring distant districts of the country, of which, after eighteen months' residence at the Grove, large portions still remained completely unknown to us. His advice and assistance in the management of the cattle were invaluable: he had acquired an intimate knowledge of the habits of the beasts, which were in a state of primeval wildness; and the danger, the difficulty, and the fatigue of hunting the lost droves, had a positive attraction for him.

When my second year at Kelvin Grove had nearly expired, and things were beginning to look a little more promising, so that Kate O'Hara's cheerful, hope-inspiring letters did not jar with my despondent thoughts, and I was beginning to answer them in a less melancholy strain, Jim George, his horse, and his favourite dog Mungo, a great ally of Battle and Bang, were 'sighted' by Bristol, and their approach was announced joyfully to me.

It was two months since Jim George had been at the Grove, and he had a good deal of desultory news to give me. None of it would have any interest in the repetition. One item was especially pleasant and reassuring: there was no rumour of bushrangers in the district, no fear of these wretches, more dreaded than the tsetse fly in Africa, or the yellow fever in New Orleans. We sat late that night, and consumed large quantities of tobacco, assisted by spirits, and arranged an exploring expedition for the following day—as was our custom, the proceeding being doubly advisable on the present occasion, from the fact, that a large drove of our best cattle had been missing for several weeks, and our unassisted efforts to find them

had proved unavailing. They had struck some new point in the endless wilderness.

Fully equipped for an excursion of some duration, we started, early on a glorious sunny morning in November, and had struck into our intended path, and pursued it for several miles, long before the fine late-hour-keeping folk at home had thought of going to their beds. Ourselves, our horses, and our dogs were in the highest spirits, and we agreed that the world was a pleasant place after all, and Tasmania, nay, the identical bush we were then in, not by any means a bad corner of it.

We talked, and laughed, and the time flew. The vast solitude around us did not oppress us; the absolute novelty of the route we were pursuing lent a tinge of the adventurous to our ride; and I can safely assert, that since I had lost sight of Kate O'Hara's brave, pale, smiling face, as the ship glided from the shore, and my exile begun, I had never experienced such a sense of light-heartedness as came over me, as Jim George and I rode on into the bush, and all the familiar surroundings of Kelvin Grove were lost to view.

'Todhunter's Station lies out that way,' said Jim George, pointing with the heavy handle of his whip to the left, over a long sweep of grass-land, through which we were riding, across a belt of scrub, and beyond a vast expanse of dim forest.

'Ay, indeed?' I answered carelessly. 'How far do you make it to his station?'

'Twenty miles as the crow flies,' said Jim George. '—Awful lonely here, ain't it?' He smiled as he spoke, heeding the loneliness not in the least.

'Lonely,' I answered, 'but not awful, I think; rather jolly to-day. We're a couple of Alexander Selkirks, Jim—monarchs of all we survey, and more too, in the fowl and brute line: a lot of our property is as much out of sight as the British fleet in the play. Perhaps we shall find the brutes at Todhunter's.'

'They had not turned up there last week,' said Jim George. 'Jos Todhunter was down my way, and he'd have been sure to mention it.'

The mere mention of a stranger was enough to excite curiosity, in a place where it finds so little to feed upon, and I proceeded to question Jim George concerning Jos Todhunter with the eagerness of a woman. He was replying carelessly; the subject had not so much interest for him. We were nearing the outer edge of the belt of scrub I have mentioned as extending between the plain and the forest, and Jim George had just bent down to set something right about the bridle of his horse, when a sharp, ringing report startled us both, and a bullet came whizzing past, and between us, causing our horses to swerve and rear. A thin cloud of white smoke floating over the edge of the scrub, directed our startled gaze to the spot whence the treacherous shot had been fired.

We looked at each other in speechless consternation for a moment; the next, Jim George's frowning gaze was fixed eagerly on the thick belt of scrub.

'Who fired that shot?' he muttered. 'It came from the scrub.'

'Hold my horse, Jim,' said I impetuously, 'and I'll go and search it.' I prepared to dismount as I spoke.

'Don't be a fool!' returned the experienced bush-rider roughly, never removing his keen gaze from the spot on which he had fixed it, in the first shock of surprise. 'There's no second shot—there's no stir. I could have sworn no living being was

within twenty miles of us.' He spoke rather to himself than to me, and I got somewhat angry.

'What do you mean?' I said. 'Why shouldn't I search the scrub? The man that fired that shot is there.'

'So is his gun,' returned Jim George drily. 'Are you armed?'

I was forced to answer 'No.'

'Then,' said Jim, turning his horse as he spoke, 'the sooner we get out of musket-range the better. —Come on, sir, and ride for your life.' He spoke not another word, and I saw apprehension, or rather comprehension, of danger in his compressed lips, and frowning, furtive eyes. I obeyed him in equal silence; and when we had ridden a sufficient distance to defy the aim of our unseen enemy, we pulled up our horses, and gave the 'coo-ee' in stentorian style. No reply. We repeated the cry. Still silence—silence so deep, stillness so profound, that we might have taken our recent alarm for an illusion, but for the light streak of white smoke, gently lifted, but not dispersed by the summer wind, which still floated in the air.

'Let us get back to Kelvin as fast as we can, and think ourselves lucky if the bushrangers are not there before us,' said Jim George with grave brevity. Not a word more did he speak; and I, knowing his experience, felt the full force of the apprehension his words conveyed. I will not say in what space of time we accomplished our return, for coolly read, my statement might be excusably disbelieved. Try and realise what it is to ride, pursued by a terrible, well-grounded fear, across water-courses, through sheep-paths, over tracts of uncleared ground, and you will know something of our case. In a space brief even to our anxiety and alarm, we reached the 'Grove,' and drew up our panting horses to reconnoitre, under cover of a ragged copse. Notwithstanding our speed, it was quite possible the bushrangers might have anticipated us, for the difficulties of the path, serious to our horses, and the windings of the only available route for mounted men, would have troubled the lawless wretches very little. They would have taken a direct course, and it was just as likely as not that we should find them in possession.

The log-house presented an appearance of perfect tranquillity. The clumsy windows and the rude doors lay open. The house consisted of four rooms, of which each couple was apart, opening into the outer world by a door in the external wall, but not communicating with each other. Two of these rooms were appropriated to my use, a third to that of Bristol and the other convict servants, the fourth served as a general store-room. They were all long, wide, low, and gloomy. In front of my door lay Bang, lazily watching Bristol, who was making a basket, a handicraft to which he took very kindly and deftly in his leisure moments. No trace of any other person was to be seen. Sure on this point, I gave the accustomed 'coo-ee.' Bristol started up, looked round, and failed to see us; but Bang ran towards our covert at once, with every mark of joyful recognition. We then approached the house, and put Bristol in possession of the cause of our sudden return. While I was relating the incident of the shot in the scrub, and the conjectures it had given rise to, I observed that Jim George kept a close, scrutinising gaze fixed upon Bristol—a look under which the man evidently winced. When he had taken our bridles from our hands, and turned away to lead the horses to their rude stable, I said:

'Why do you look at Bristol? You don't suspect him of anything, do you, Jim?'

'I'm not sure,' was the discouraging reply. 'I won't be sure yet a while. I'd rather not know it, if he has sold us, because, in that case, it's all up with us—we are booked through for kingdom come. So the doubt's a deal pleasanter.—Come, let's go in, and look to the firearms.'

'Then you think they will come?' I asked.

'Of course. Don't you? It wasn't a ghost, I suppose, that fired that shot in the scrub; and if it wasn't a ghost, but a man, he meant something by it. There's nowhere to go but here, and nothing to get but your goods.—Where are Joe and Jerry?'

'Making a fence round the foot of Cromartie there. It's impossible to keep the sheep off the mountain, and I've had them at it this week or more.'

'They're out of call, then? And they camp out, of course?'

'Yes. Jerry was over here for provisions yesterday: there's no chance of their turning up.'

Bristol now joined us, and we held a hurried council, while we carefully inspected the firearms. Joe and Jerry had their guns with them. Our available armoury consisted of a double-barrelled gun and a carbine, both loaded and ready for service. We closed and barred the doors, and all the windows save one, at which Jim George and I stationed ourselves; while Bristol prepared a substantial meal, to which our late alarm did not prevent our doing ample justice. Battle and Bang were ordered to keep watch outside, but Mungo was kept at his master's heels.

'He will be answerable for one of them,' said Jim George with cheerful coolness; and the brute stretched his fore-legs, and pushed his head forward, panting, and shewing the crimson cavern of his mouth with most suggestive and, as we were quite sure he would make no unpleasant mistakes in the ardour of a possible fray, reassuring effect.

The hours wore on, and the stillness remained unbroken. The sun rose to the zenith, and began to decline, and no sound came to disturb us. The hours were irksome. As men will, under circumstances of alarm and suspense, we talked of cognate subjects; and many a horrible tale of bushranging enormities was told by Jim George and Bristol, on whom I observed the former still kept a close and vigilant watch. I noticed, in particular, that whenever Bristol approached the only open window near enough to be seen from the outside, Jim George contrived to place himself beside him; and also, that having bidden me to keep the carbine close to my hand, he never lost sight of the double barrel himself for a moment. He had exhibited rather ostentatiously a very murderous knife, which he carried in a convenient pocket made for the purpose in the breast of his coat; and having asked me, unheard by Bristol, whether I was similarly armed, received with singular satisfaction the assurance that a weapon, which might have been the twin-brother of his own, was within easy reach of my hand. Our preparations made, our precautions taken, a long period of inaction set in, and nothing but the horrible anecdotes of bushranging, in which Jim George and Bristol seemed determined to outvie each other, kept alive the sensation of alarm in my mind, or prevented me from regarding the occurrence of the morning as a fortuitous accident, unlikely to be attended with any results. Bush-

rangers had not been included among my personal experiences of Tasmania, and I was far from realising them with the vivid fear of my better-informed companions. We had taken up our station in the store-room, into which we had carried such loose articles as were at all valuable or portable; and as the hours passed on, and no alarm was given, we began to think of returning to the more comfortable quarters formed by my rooms, when, as the darkness was rapidly settling down upon the earth, a shot fired within fifty yards of the house roused us from our fancied security.

'Here they are!' whispered Jim George, as he rapidly extinguished the lights, and caught up his gun. Bristol armed himself with a heavy crowbar, and crouched down by the window, ready for an assailant in that direction; while Jim and I took up our position on either side of the wide, heavy, clumsy door, ready to fire on the first who should burst it open. All was quiet for a little; the dogs gave no signal of an intrusion. We waited breathlessly for the rush of footsteps, and the note of war from savage throats; neither came.

'I'll end this,' said Jim George. 'Some one must be near, and there can hardly be more than one, or some noise must be heard.' So saying, he softly undid the bolt, and bidding me stand a little back from the doorway, with my gun ready, he opened the door just sufficiently to admit of his stepping noiselessly out, and glided away along the wall, towards the end of the long building, in the direction whence the shot had come. My heart beat fast; suspense was becoming intensely painful, when I heard a voice cry 'Stand!'—and George's answer: 'I am standing.' The next instant, the glimmer of light coming through the partially open door was stopped by the barrel of a musket being pushed through the opening, and again a voice cried 'Stand!' Noiselessly, I stepped a little forward, so as to bring my gun on a line with the musket-barrel in the doorway; I raised the weapon; in another moment I should have fired it, when Bristol rushed forward, snatched the gun from my hand, and shouted: 'Good God! it's Joe.' It was Joe; and Joe, quite unconscious of his deadly peril, was pulled into the room by Bristol, grinning idiotically; while I fell back against the wall, pale, sick, and trembling, at the fearfully narrow escape I had had of taking an innocent life. Bristol shouted to Jim George, who came in hastily, and was stupefied with amazement on beholding Joe, who had thrown his discharged gun upon the ground, and was laughing rudely, and pointing at me with his outstretched hand.

'What do you mean, you grinning rascal?' said Jim, as he seized Joe by the collar, and twitched him round towards him as if he had been a child. 'Was it you who fired that shot just now, and called to me out there to stand?'

'Yes, it was,' said Joe, rather crest-fallen, and making no effort to shake the strong hand off his collar. 'I only did it for a lark.'

'What brought you here, you confounded idiot?' said Jim, letting go his hold, but still looking at him threateningly.

'I came to fetch some tobacco—Jerry forgot it,' returned Joe sulkily. 'What have I done? What are you all afraid on?'

'Why, you wretched fool,' said Jim, 'you have been nearer your death than you'll ever be again till the right time comes. I'd have shot you out there, if I could have seen you, and the dogs had

barked; and I cannot make out why your master didn't shoot you here.'

'Why—why—what do you mean?' stammered Joe, turning as pale as death, and looking vacantly about him. 'Why should you, or he either, want to shoot me?'

'Why should you try to pass for a bushranger, you fool?' said Jim. 'What did you fire at just now—twenty minutes ago, I mean?'

'Only a 'possum. I saw it, though it was nigh dark, dangling from a tree; and then I thought it would be a lark to give Bristol a fright.—I didn't know you had come home, sir,' said Joe, in a terrified whine.

'I should have shot you dead, my gun to your head, in another instant, you foolish fellow,' I said. 'Practical jokes don't do for the bush. Bristol saved your life; and me from a deed I should have bitterly repented.'

'Oh, curse your repentance,' said Jim roughly. 'The fellow's a fool. Come—let us leave him to his preserver, and get to bed.'

Bristol, who had been quietly relighting the candles, and putting the guns away, looked at him, and shrugged his shoulders with a disdainful air. Jim George stalked out of one door and into the other, and I followed him, carrying a light, and leaving Joe, who was shaking and sobbing hysterically, in all the terror of having realised the extent of his danger, and the narrowness of his escape, to the good offices of the convict, whom I at least trusted, if Jim George did not.

We 'turned in' without delay, thoroughly tired with the exertions and emotions of the day. Jim George lay puffing his pipe in the dark for a while, and growling staccato objurgations on the stupidity and absurdity of Joe. I felt their justice, but my mind was full rather of the merciful interposition which had saved me from killing the man, and I was silent. After a while, Jim left off growling, and fell asleep, and I was just about to follow his example, when a sudden thought occurred to me, which induced me to sit up, very wide awake, and call out to my companion in a tone which effectually roused him: 'Jim, Jim, it's all clear about Joe, of course, but there's *nothing* in this explanation to account for the shot in the scrub!'

MEAT FOR THE MILLION.

ENGLISHMEN are not hippophagi; their love for horseflesh shews itself in another way: a liking for the saddle we confess to, but from weakness of stomach, or strength of imagination, we decline to have the whole animal thrust down our throats. Our neighbours across the Strait are less scrupulous, or more philosophical, if it be true that the flesh of horses and asses contains more nourishment than that of fat beeves and South Downs, for which assertion Baron Liebig is the high authority. In Paris, there are now seven authorised slaughter-houses for horseflesh, killing about twenty tons a week of that delicacy. There are also six establishments for making horse-sausages—said to be equal to the famed *charcuterie* of Lyon. Our tastes, indeed, are not yet educated to this novel diet; but things have come to a serious pass with us. What is a man with a very moderate income, and a small family of immoderate appetite, to do? We are mocked every day by seeing that the price of beef in the cattle-market is at an average of four shillings and fourpence per stone, but we know

that a pound of rump-steak costs one shilling and twopence at least. And in spite of all that the Acclimatisation Society may have done, as yet jerboas, kangaroos, and such foreign beasts are not sufficiently plentiful to enable us to laugh at our butcher. Happily, in this emergency, we have lately had a new field of supply opened to us. Through the prairies of the River Plate roam twenty-two millions of cattle, and thirty-five millions of sheep, of which twelve per cent. were slaughtered annually, and, until a few years ago, merely for their hides and skins. We are told that at Buenos Ayres, meat is so cheap that it is not bought or sold by the pound, but by the joint, so that the young lady's fancy, who said that a leg of mutton was—that and nothing more (or less), may be realised. At Buenos Ayres, it sells for tenpence or a shilling. Beef is even cheaper. The only question is—How to bring this abundance to our homes.

Charqui was tried, and, from personal experience, we must pronounce it a failure. It required soaking for something like twenty-four hours, and slow boiling for twelve hours more, and after all, was little more palatable than good white leather. This result was more than probable, when we consider the class of animals from which *charqui* is made, and the mode of making it. We all know that the process of preservation by salting, to a great extent deprives meat of its nutritious qualities, by extracting much of the albuminous and nitrogenous elements. No experienced housewife will have a boiled round of beef for dinner without giving us the following day a bowl of pease-soup; and with good reason, for the latter is made with the liquor in which the beef has been boiled, and contains no small portion of its albumen and nitrogen. It is found that this extractive process of salting operates much more rapidly upon lean than upon fat meat. Our English beef, interleaved with layers of fat, is not so much affected by curing. Hence salt-pork is more nutritious than salt-beef; but the South American beef is all lean; in fact, it bears about the same relation to ours, as the flesh of the red-deer from a Scotch moor does to a fat haunch from Richmond Park; or as the stroke-oar of a University Eight to Daniel Lambert. A further disadvantage is, that the animal is killed while in a state of high excitement from exercise. Wild herds are driven in from pasture at full gallop into a large enclosed space, and then goaded out one by one to meet the knife of the slaughterer; so that they have been chased for perhaps five or six hours immediately before being killed. Now, we know that the result of this active exercise is to exhaust the nitrogenous constituents of the flesh, and thus to render it even more sensitive to the subsequent extractive powers of the brine in which it is to be preserved. These two causes make it still a matter of doubt whether we can get as good meat from Brazil as we have here; but there is no doubt that we can get it sufficiently good; and if any one of the processes which we are about to describe will bring it to our homes at from fourpence to fivepence a pound, we shall have good reason to be satisfied.

The first of these is now pretty well known as Liebig's *Extractum Carnis*; the second, that of Mr Morgan, is an improved process of salting; the third, of Messrs Paris and Sloper, may be called the deoxygenating process. Baron Liebig's plan has one

great merit: it extracts almost all the watery constituents from the preserved meat. We know that in every hundred pounds of butcher-meat there are about seventy-eight pounds of water. Now, water is good enough in itself, and (especially) when mixed with other things, but is certainly not worth the expense of bringing over from South America. On the other hand, the *Extractum Carnis*, which is something like treacle in consistency, and glaze in flavour, is fit for nothing but soup; and we want something with more body in it for hard-working men and women. We obtain this by the other plans, but then we have the water as well; so that an absolutely perfect process has still to be invented.

In making Liebig's *Extractum*, the meat, after hanging to cool for twenty-four hours, is put into rapidly revolving cylinders, armed with sharp teeth inside, and so torn into a pulp, much in the same way as paper is made. This pulp is passed into a vat with water, and is steamed for an hour; after which it flows on to a trough-shaped reservoir or strainer, by which the liquor is separated from the in-nutritious fibre; and the former drips into another vat, where all the fat is skimmed off. We have now to get rid of the water, and this is done by boiling the liquor in large open vats with jets of steam; at the same time, a current of air from bellows is passed over the surface, to increase the evaporation, and to prevent the steam from returning, condensed, into the vats. This process lasts for about eight hours; and the condensed liquor is then filtered off, and ready for packing in tins or jars. One pound of this essence contains the goodness of thirty-three pounds of meat, or enough to make soup for ten dozen men; and we can testify to its excellence. In London, it is at present sold almost entirely by chemists, who must make a large profit on it, for they charge from eighteen to twenty shillings a pound, although it is to be imported from Antwerp, at present its only port of consignment, for about twelve shillings and sixpence. We understand, however, that arrangements are now in progress for establishing a direct agency for its sale in London; in which case we shall be able to get meat in one form at least for a little more than fourpence a pound, and this free from bone, and in a condition to keep for many days.

Next comes Mr Morgan's plan, one already in operation, and by which five hundred thousand pounds of meat have within the last year been imported into Liverpool, and there sold at fourpence a pound. This, however, includes both bone and fat; indeed, the animal might be preserved whole by it, and sent home all standing. Mr Morgan avails himself of the natural organs of circulation for diffusing the brine through the meat. The heart is opened, and the blood allowed to run out; then, into the left ventricle, where all circulation begins, is fastened a gutta-percha tube, communicating with a reservoir of brine some twenty feet above the ground. By natural pressure, the liquor permeates every artery and vein; and the completion of the process is ascertained when the brine begins to flow from the right ventricle, or the terminus of our natural circulation. The whole process for preserving an ox only occupies about ten minutes; the pressure exerted being about eleven pounds to the square inch, and some thirteen gallons of brine being injected. Its completeness is proved by the fact, that if an incision be afterwards made in the flesh, a stream of brine exudes.

It has also this advantage over the ordinary process of salting from the outside, that it does not extract the natural juices of the meat. As a preservative agent, it combines with and coagulates them in the substance of the meat; and it is proposed to improve its action by the addition of phosphoric acid (the main element of a vegetable diet) and nitrate of potash.

The third process, however, promises to give us meat in its fresh and raw state, like butcher-meat just killed, at from fourpence to fivepence a pound. Some ten thousand pounds of meat have already been cured on this principle, and are ready for exportation; while the patentees have long ago satisfied their guests at the London Tavern of the good quality of their product.

The principle is not new, for just thirty years ago a patent was taken out for preserving meat in cases whence the oxygen was exhausted, and its place supplied by gases which are non-supporters of combustion. This was a French patent, and proposed, after soaking the meat in brine, to replace atmospheric air by carbonic acid gas, or by a combination of hydrogen and azote. The gas which the present patentees use is still a secret; but the whole process, if successful, deserves for its ingenuity and utility, the protection of a patent. One advantage is, that we get rid of the bone, and retain the fat. Thus, in enumerating the merits of our three plans, we may remember that the first gets rid of water and bone, but loses the carbonaceous elements contained in the fat; the second retains all the principles of the meat, but little deteriorated by salting, yet gives the useless cost of importing bone and water; the third still imports the water, but saves the carriage of bone, and retains the nutriment of the fat. A very simple plan is resorted to for exhausting the oxygen from the tins in which the meat is packed—water is forced in from a small hole in the bottom, and all air thus driven out at another small hole in the top, the tins being otherwise hermetically sealed. As soon as the water begins to flow from the upper hole, the pressure is stopped, and from above, a stream of the unknown gas forces the water out, and takes its place. The stopping of the two orifices must be a matter of some nicety, as the whole merit of the plan rests on the complete exclusion of atmospheric air; but however this may be done, when the holes are soldered up, each tin is ready for exportation.

Each of the plans we have described will no doubt have its advocates and its customers; and we cannot but hope that their combined effect will, before long, bring within the reach of many who now want it, a good meal of meat at least once a day.



LORD ULSWATER.

CHAPTER V.—AMONG THIEVES.

'A QUEER start this!' muttered the driver of a London four-wheeled cab, as he stood chinking the money in his hand, and inquisitively eyeing the receding figures of his late passengers. 'A nice place it is, surely!' he growled out, as, with a disappointed shake of the head, he gave up the effort to solve the hopeless problem, as to what business could take his late fares to such a quarter of the town. Then he climbed to his box, and drove off, not at the peculiar crawling pace which

empty cabs affect, but at a brisk trot. There was little chance of custom in Great Popplewell Street.

For Great Popplewell Street is of evil repute—one of the noisiest, and poorest, and foulest of all the foul, poor, and noisy thoroughfares in the far east of London. In Great Popplewell Street, midnight is as noonday elsewhere, the season for such dubious industry and life as the district affords. The swarming population of a hundred courts, and rents, and lanes, and stifling blind alleys, and other dens where unwholesome existence stagnates in utter misery and vice, emptied itself into Great Popplewell Street as brooks fall into a river. It was between ten and eleven o'clock, and the sultry summer's night was nowhere so oppressive as in that reeking thoroughfare and its tributaries. Heavy, and warm, and still, the air was laden with ill odours, and resonant with shrill cries, drunken howls, blasphemy, threats, and ribaldry. There was much quarrelling always in that neighbourhood, and not seldom fights, that swelled to the proportions of a riot, and so came to be chronicled in newspaper paragraphs, and thus a dispute more or less caused little wonder to the frequenters of the place.

The cabman's late fares, however, were by no means frequenters of the place, as even an inexperienced eye might have told at the first glance. They were too well dressed for that, and had not the gait or the bearing of the regular denizens of such a locality. Yet they were as ill-assorted a pair as ever trod the London pavement in company. The more stalwart of the two, tall and upright as a life-guardsmen, seemed to listen with some impatience to the words which his associate uttered as they walked along. 'Do, my Lord,' whispered Mr Moss disconsolately—'do button your coat, so as to hide that guard-chain. We shall have a row else. They can't resist the sight of gold, and it's really not fair to tempt them. It isn't indeed.'

Lord Ulswater laughed at the little man's eagerness, but a glance at the lounging groups around shewed him that the warning was not needless. Already there were hungry eyes gloating over the coveted bauble, and a knot of unshaven ruffians, hanging about the entrance of a court, began to nudge one another, and to whisper together in a manner that denoted no good intention. Lord Ulswater buttoned his coat. 'You are my mentor to-night, Moss,' he said, 'had carelessly; and I suppose you know your clients better than I do.' Then they strode on in silence.

The progress of the wayfarers was but slow, for there was much jostling on the crowded pavement, and many stationary groups, through which a passage had to be made by sheer force of pushing. Especially was this the case around the swing-doors of the illuminated gin-palaces, whence came forth gushes of light, as some fresh customer went slinking in or out, and which were certainly the most sumptuous edifices of which the long street could boast; for commerce in Great Popplewell Street was tainted by the corrupted atmosphere of the place, and assumed a weird and Walsburgian aspect. There were more stalls than shops, more barrows than stalls; and such shops as there were, open and unglazed, had flaring fan-tail gas-burners, whence the yellow glare fell fiercely on the coarse wares and viands, the old clothes and worn-out household gear, the fried fish, huge oysters, whelks, oranges, and garden-stuff, exposed on slabs and

boards. There was much haggling and wrangling around the barrows and stalls, much scrambling, scuffling, and angry abuse, for the vendors had need of vigilance, seeing that around their tempting wares there prowled incessantly a band of wolfish-eyed boys, ragged, desperate, barefooted, ever on the watch for a chance of snatching the wherewithal to sup, and so to forget their chronic hunger for a while.

'If those young gonophs—beg your pardon, my Lord—thieves, I mean,' grumbled Mr Moss, 'were the only scamps we had to pass through, our work would be easy enough. I'll answer for it, they have tried our pockets a dozen times already, but I took care of that before.'

And indeed Mr Moss was right. That outlying part of the great city contains more dangerous personages than the wretched urchins, thieves from their cradles, for whom jails waited as the goal of their career. Great Popplewell Street is infamous in the annals of the London police-courts, for in and near it dwell ruffians to whom the sight of a glazed hat and a blue uniform is as scarlet to a bull, and whose lives are written in the criminal records of their country.

'Look! that shews your Lordship the sort of neighbourhood we're in!' whispered Mr Moss once, gripping Lord Ulswater by the arm, as four policemen went by in single file, wearing their greatcoats, and with their cutlasses on. 'You never saw that sort of thing in Piccadilly, I'll be sworn, but here it's common. Bless you, they think no more of murdering a solitary constable hereabouts than of killing a cockroach. Hist! come over to the left. I don't like the looks of that lot yonder.'

The lot to which Mr Moss alluded consisted of a knot of scowling, sullen-eyed men in frowsy fustian, hanging about the entrance to some narrow alley, that yawned blackly, like the mouth of a cavern. These were no half-starved striplings, like the juvenile pickpockets around the stalls, but sturdy scoundrels whom it would scarcely be pleasant to meet upon a lonely road after dark. They lounged about the mouth of the alley, as a shark slowly swims before the entrance to a harbour, waiting for prey. Whether Lord Ulswater was unwilling to comply with his guide's hint, or whether the attorney's words were drowned in the din around, is uncertain, but he held on his way steadily. The fellows at the end of the alley looked at one another, and then gathered together as if for a rush, and stopped, hesitating. The nearer of the two intended victims looked too tall and too strong to make the projected onslaught a safe one. While they paused in doubt, thrusting one another forward, but reluctant to bear the brunt of the expected resistance, another and more powerful man, with beetling brows and a scarred face, came shouldering his way through them, snarling out curses at their cowardice.

'You tackle him, Bill. Let Bendigo Bill tackle the swell!' growled out three hoarse voices; and the master-ruffian made a dash at Lord Ulswater, and tried to tear his coat open. The confederates followed at their leader's heels, but fell back aghast, as Bendigo Bill, hurled against the wall behind him, fell crashing down upon the pavement, and lay without motion, like a log.

'We're in for it now,' said Mr Moss, bustling up to his companion's help; but at nearly the same instant a long-haired Jew-boy darted across the street, and gave a peculiarly shrill whistle, twice

repeated. The men seemed to recognise this signal, for they drew back with a sheepish air, while a crowd began to collect. There was a word or two interchanged between the lad who had whistled and one of the ruffians.

'Beg pardon, Mr Moss; I didn't know you,' said the man who had spoken to the Jew. 'It's all a mistake.'

'All right, Sam,' answered Mr Moss very affably; and he drew Lord Ulswater away before the others had succeeded in lifting the redoubted Bendigo Bill, breathing out feeble imprecations, from the slimy flagstones.

'I hope your Lordship will never come across that fellow again. He looked like one to bear malice, I'm afraid, and he'll never forgive you that knock-down blow,' said the lawyer, seriously enough, as they proceeded on their way.

'I don't suppose his forgiveness is of much consequence to me,' said Lord Ulswater, with his usual composure; 'but I am much more curious as to that running-footman who seems to accompany our progress.' And as he spoke he pointed to the Jew-lad who had whistled so opportunely, and who was now proceeding at a shuffling run upon the muddy kerbstone a few yards in advance.

The attorney chuckled with evident enjoyment. 'Ikey is a sharp child,' said he; 'he can talk the jargon of every gang hereabouts. And we don't trust entirely to Ikey, either,' he added, calling Lord Ulswater's attention to the fact that a burly man, in a sailor's peacoat of rough cloth, was walking on the opposite side of the street, and evidently regulating his pace by that of Mr Moss. Then he pointed to another man, in the white slop-suit of a navigator, who was loitering along the pavement a few yards behind. Both these men had hooked noses, broad jaws, and bristly blue beards; both were strong and active; and both looked like Jew prize-fighters, as very probably they were.

'There would have been two or three to back us up, if it had come to a scuffle yonder,' observed Mr Moss, as he pushed on; 'but it's a deal better as it is.' And at this instant they turned out of Great Popplewell Street, and plunged into a net-work of lanes—very dark, dirty, and intricate—through which they threaded their way as best they might, guided by the little long-haired strippling, whose countersign had been acknowledged by their late adversaries. Here they met but very few passers-by. Now and then, a female shape would glide past like a shadow, hover for a moment at the angle of the street, and finally be lost in the noisy, glaring vortex of the great thoroughfare that they had left. Presently, however, there came to their ears a dull roaring sound, that gradually increased in volume, and it was evident that they were approaching some other main artery of traffic and bustle. They pressed on, and the noises grew more various and distinct. They could hear the clamour of many voices, some loud in quarrel, some joining in the chorus of a drinking-song, the pauses in which were filled up by the strains of fiddles, the clinking of glasses, and the stamping of feet.

'We're very near the water-side, now—the Docks, you know,' said Mr Moss in his companion's ear; 'and this is one of the German dancing-houses where sailors go.' And he pointed to a large lighted window, where many forms might be indistinctly seen to pass and whirl behind the thin red curtain. The Jew-boy in advance now whistled shrilly.

'We have arrived,' said Mr Moss, coming to a dead stop. Close to the tall building whence came the sounds of the dancing and clamorous revelry, so close, indeed, that every squeak of the fiddle, and every tipsy shout from the brawling mob within, was plainly audible through the thin wall, was a dismal old dwelling of blackened brickwork, with its windows looming forth, dark and mournful, as if in protest against the flare and glitter of the gas next door. Here Mr Moss had halted, and he waited passively until the young Jew, who had bent his head down to the keyhole, and twice administered a series of graduated taps with his clenched hand to the blistered panels of the door, uttering at the same time a peculiar cry like the low twittering of a swallow, came back on tiptoe. Then the gleam of a candle flashed across one of the dark sad windows, and there was a sound of rusty bolts drawn back, and the door was grudgingly opened to the extent of about half its width. 'Right, governor!' whispered Ikey; and Mr Moss stepped forward without hesitation, and he and Lord Ulswater entered the house. The door was instantly reclosed and made fast. The woman who had admitted them was a wrinkled hag, with ragged gray locks falling from under a tattered widow's cap, wore a seaman's greatcoat, and had a short discoloured pipe in her mouth. This grisly janitress shaded her bleared eyes with her hand, and took a deliberate survey of the intruders.

'You be the lawyer chap?' she asked abruptly of Mr Moss, speaking in the nasal accent of New England, uneffaced by years spent amid London fog and London gin. The attorney nodded. 'And he be the swell? I've been looking for ye an hour, catching cold in the draughts. Come along this way.' And she turned, and conducted them up the creaking stairs. It was evident that the house, deserted and desolate as it looked, had no lack of occupants. As they passed upwards, they heard the deep growl of several voices from both the rooms on the first floor; but there was no pause made until the old woman threw open the door of a room on the second story, and gruffly bade them enter. They complied; and their conductress, grumbling as she did so, set down the long-wicked candle on a chair, closed the door, and groped her way down-stairs again. Mr Moss and his noble client looked around them with some curiosity, for the chamber in which they were was oddly fitted up. The window was closed with boards, into the interstices of which clay had been tightly rammed, so that no ray of light could make its way from within to betray the late vigils of its tenant. Hot as the night was, a small stove, not only alight, but glowing dull red with the amount of fuel heaped within the bars, stood in front of the chimney-piece. A large screen divided the room into two unequal parts, the smaller of which contained a mean truckle-bed, a sailor's chest, and some garments hanging to pegs and hooks. On the other side was a long table, on which stood a shaded lamp, which threw a strong light upon the objects at its foot. By this lamp, which was of the kind used by watchmakers, a small old man, with gray hair and whiskers, with red eyes, shrewd features, and a quaint resemblance to a sly old rat, with a horn-rimmed lens stuck by force of muscular compression in his left eye, was working with a steel file at some instrument analogous to a dentist's forceps. The table was littered with shining lumps of metal, broken moulds of

plaster of Paris, dies and punches of iron and steel, Hessian retorts, Cornish crucibles, blowpipes, spirit-lamps, vials of different shapes, chisels, pincers, and glass jars closely stoppered. There were also a smith's bellows and a galvanic battery, new and glossy, with the silvery amalgam of the zinc-plates uncorroded, and the French-polish of the mahogany stand undimmed by use.

'Coiner! A noted hand!' murmured Mr Moss, parenthetically, in his companion's ear; and then addressing the old man by the title of 'Professor Brum,' asked him how he did.

'You ought not to let me see that, Brum, you know,' the lawyer remarked in an expostulatory manner, pointing to a pile of cracked matrices that lay at the old man's elbow. 'I may have to defend you some day, and call witnesses to character, you know. Some things are best kept dark.'

Professor Brum, whose real name was doubtless preserved in writing by the Clerk of the Arraigns in Her Majesty's Central Criminal Court, but who was generally known in private life by his learned *alias*, looked up at the attorney with an odd twinkle in his wicked old eyes. 'I'm all right, Mr Moss, sir,' he chuckled out; 'got a job—button-making—I have. They can't touch me for making buttons, can they, Mr Moss, sir?' and he laughed inwardly, till the laugh ended in a fit of coughing that brought tears into his eyes as he slyly contemplated the tall gentleman standing by the lawyer's side.

'And about Jem Sark, Professor? how about Jem Sark and his plans, eh? You can tell us, you see, for it is not long since you and he smoked a pipe together, at the other side of the world—is it, Brum?'

'Four months, three weeks, and two days,' observed the veteran numismatist, brushing the steel filings from his shabby sleeve. 'I've no call to disguise the fact, Mr Moss. My time's worked out, my time is. So far as being a returned transport goes, I might look in at Scotland Yard to-morrow, and leave my visiting-card on Sir Richard, I might. I'm not a runaway government man, I ain't.'

'But you think that Sark probably may be—is not that your meaning?' asked Lord Ulswater quickly.

The old man looked more like a rat than ever, as he shewed his long yellow fangs in a grin. 'I don't mean anything,' he said with provoking composure, and resumed his work.

'Come, come, Professor,' put in Mr Moss in the most coaxing tone of his oily voice; 'don't let us go back from our little mutual arrangement. Here's some eye-salve that will make you see my friend's meaning.' And he counted down ten sovereigns on the blackened woodwork of the table.

'Take back your yellowboys, Mr Moss,' said the old man in his wheezy voice. 'I've thought the matter over again. Second thoughts are safest, they are. It's not worth my while to get myself into Jem Sark's black-books for ten pounds. With Dandy Jem, it's a word and a blow, and sometimes the blow comes first. If you doubled it, now?'

Mr Moss bit his lips, and looked inquiringly at Lord Ulswater, who answered the look by a quick impatient nod. The lawyer at once produced from an inner pocket a crumpled bank-note, unfolded it, and laid it beside the sovereigns. The rat-like old man very coolly and minutely scanned the

water-mark and the signature. 'Ah! that always was a cut above me!' he said with a little regretful sigh.

'Now speak, man,' said Lord Ulswater, with a petulance unusual to him.

Professor Brum looked up with a quaint leer. 'I will speak,' said he, 'and without more pressing. You want to know whether Jem Sark and the missus are likely soon to return to the country of which they used to be ornaments and blessin's. Well, all I've got to say is this: when a woman sets her heart upon a thing in a general way she gets it, and specially when she's a handsome woman, and a clever woman, and a proud woman, and a woman with a spice of the devil in her, like Jem Sark's beautiful wife. That's all.'

'Then she deceived me—she—it is her wish, not Sark's, to come back to England?' burst out Lord Ulswater with an irrepressible betrayal of his anger and surprise.

The old coiner clawed up the bribe in his lean hand, and thrust it into his waistcoat pocket. 'All I say is this,' he croaked out: 'if there's anybody that Mrs Sark has a grudge against—if there's anybody Mrs Sark has a hold upon—if there's anybody Mrs Sark has the will and the power to ruin, let that party look out for his own interests, and soon too. If the sea was twice as wide, it couldn't keep her back. Poverty won't stop her. She and her husband will be back on English ground afore long, if they have to come as stowaways in the hold of a clipper—they will.—Now, Mr Moss, you've had your money's worth for your money. I've got a job to finish. Leave me to my buttons.'

They could extract no more information from him; and they left him, being reconducted by the gaunt old New England woman to the street-door, where Ikey and the two able-bodied Jews awaited them. Their homeward course was unmarked by any adventure. At the corner of the Old Jewry, they parted company, Lord Ulswater springing into a Hansom that loitered there. 'The Eleusis Club,' he said; 'and drive fast!'

CHAPTER VI.—AT THE CLUB.

The Eleusis was a small club—small, and very choice. It was a work of time, and patience, and strategy for the most eligible candidate to get himself enrolled in that exclusive band of brothers. Aspirants of inferior pretensions, after manœuvring for years to obtain the dubious privilege of being put up for ballot there, were sure to be blackballed without mercy. It was a far easier achievement to win a baronetcy, or the Grand Cross of the Bath, or to head a following in the House of Commons, than to become an Eleusinian. It was a very old club, and its reputation was historical. The great dandies of other days, the bloods and beaux of the Georgian reigns, had handled the dice-box and dealt the cards within its venerable walls. Provincials eyed it with respectful awe as they passed its large bay-window. It was not very splendid or imposing to look upon, but there was a magic haze of prestige that surrounded it, and which lent it an enchantment in which the great palaces of political clubs were wholly lacking. The Eleusis might be beaten as to its cellar, and surpassed as to its cook; it was not upon such gross material merits as these that it took its stand, and based its claims to homage. Like the snowy summits of the Jungfrau, its chief charm lay in its extreme inaccessibility. Of this club, however, Lord Ulswater was a member.

It was late, and only two or three men were lingering in the smoking-room of the Eleusis. A stray Actæon of a bucolical visitor, could such a one have slipped unrebuked past the lynx-eyed porter in the hall, and so into the penetralia of the building, might not easily have discerned any peculiar nimbus encircling the beatified brows of these, the initiated. They were remarkable for nothing, unless it were for the terms of easy intimacy with one another on which they seemed to be. The Eleusinians, for the most part, knew each other. Their tastes and habits were congenial, and their walk in life the same. Rank alone would no more carry a candidate triumphantly through that fiery ordeal of a ballot of theirs, than money or genius would do it. To be an Eleusinian was to be a man of fashion. The late Lord Ulswater, for instance, would probably have been rejected, had he put in a plea for membership. But the present peer, while still a younger brother, had gone through the perilous probation with triumphant success.

'Going anywhere?' asked one member of another, lazily beating off the white ashes from his cigar. 'Nothing going on to-night worth looking in at, is there?'

'Nothing at all,' answered the Eleusinian addressed, yawning unaffectedly. 'Nothing going on! It was the high tide of the London season. The rank, wealth, wit, and fashion of the greatest city in the world had gathered together within the Bills of Mortality, nay, within much narrower limits. There were two prima-donnas warbling to the grand tiers of two Italian Operas; there were ever so many brilliant theatres; perhaps a hundred crowded parties, from Bloomsbury to Belgravia, were taxing the resources of London; that very night, there was a gigantic crush in Mayfair, whereat polite multitudes were collected. Each of these young gentlemen had a score of invitations lying dormant on his mantel-piece, but there is such a thing as a surfeit of sweetness, and the season had lasted some time.'

'To be sure, there's old Lady Dol's dance!' said Chirper of the Life-guards, after further reflection.

'Horrid old bore!' returned Laxington, who might be described as of the Royal Yacht Squadron, since, out of town, he lived upon the Solent. That was all they said of a prodigious entertainment given to about eleven hundred of the Upper Ten Thousand, if such a sacred myriad there be, and at which every one was supposed to be enjoying the splendid hospitality of the Right Hon. the Mar- chioness of Doldrums, of Castle Despond, in the kingdom of Ireland. This *grande dame*, of whose ball the *Morning Post* of the morrow would discourse as of a stolen glimpse of Fairyland, was the 'Lady Dol' thus contemptuously alluded to.

'You ought to be there, Laxington, and dancing away like a good young man. And so ought I, for the matter of that. They'll say we weren't asked. Crawley will, I know,' said Lieutenant Chirper.

'So much the better. Quite a distinction. It's a deal pleasanter here. I wonder how hot they find themselves now, by Jove! at Lady Dol's,' suggested Mr Laxington, very placidly.

'Flora Hastings will be there, I know. The belle of the season. Splendid she looked last night at York House!' said the third member of the group, Tregooze of the Colonial Office, a rising man, who was thought to govern his chief, and to be a cabinet minister in embryo.

'Belle of the season! as if there were not half-a-dozen belles of the season. Hate the word! it puts me in mind of a bad novel,' sneered Chirper of the Life-guards.

'You never read a novel, or any other book, in your life, Chirper, my boy!' said Mr Tregooze serenely; 'and Miss Hastings is the belle of the season, in spite of you. Beautiful girl she is, for those that like fair women at least; but it's a pity she should be going to marry that muff, Morgan: though I know he's got lots of tin,' added the speaker almost deprecatingly, for money has a mysterious power to blunt the edge of hostile criticism.

'I know,' said Laxington, 'that we'd particularly pill him, if he got himself put up for ballot here; and that's all I know about him. He's got a yacht—the *Wing*; he bought her from Troytown, when Charley went to the bad; a pretty thing she is, and very fast—but we declined the honour of his company in our little place at Cowes, when he got old Boodleborough to propose him.'

'I rather like Morgan,' observed Mr Tregooze, between the puffs of his cigar. 'I think he's a slow fellow, but not a bad one. He was my fag at Eton, and used to catch it awfully for burning the toast and spilling'—puff!—'the coffee over his master's knees. He is sure to be in parliament, and for the county too, next election. He's as rich as the Duke of Towcester. His character is very good. The old ironmaster, his father, who began life with a pickaxe and twelve bob a week, left him such a fortune in land, stock, scrip, and shares, as the Chancellor of the Exchequer would give his ears to confiscate. He has got a yacht, and is sea-sick; hunters, and can't ride; race-horses, and forgets his own jockey's colours. He has no relation except that poor girl with the crooked spine—Miss Ruth, you know—the sister. He reads blue-books till his eyes ache; and he's to marry Flora Hastings.'

'Well, he can afford it; I can't,' said Laxington, throwing away the stump of his cigar.—'Are you going my way, Chirper?'

'Yes,' said Chirper, getting slowly on his feet; 'and so is Tregooze.'

But Tregooze was not going to quit the club with Laxington and Chirper. 'I promised to meet a man here. I must give him a little law. It's Ulswater.'

'O yes, you great political swells all hang together,' chirruped Chirper. 'I'm afraid to speak to Ulswater after that speech of his, and all the puffs the papers gave him. He'll be premier, ten years hence, if he don't train too fine.—Good-night? And they went.'

Mr Tregooze left alone, smoked and fidgeted, and looked repeatedly at his watch. It was late. He was tired. The club was deserted; and the smoking-room waiter, to whom sleep was precious, hovered about the door, and eyed him wistfully, hoping that he would go. But Mr Tregooze did not go. He was under obligations to Lord Ulswater. But for the friendship of John Carnac, Arthur Tregooze would never have been a member of the Eleusis; so he waited.

At last Lord Ulswater came in with a quick tread. His smooth broad brow wore an unusual look of trouble upon it.

'Too bad, I call this. An hour and twenty minutes behind time! An awful sacrifice to friendship, in my opinion,' said Tregooze of the Colonial

Office from his divan. Then, dropping his light tone at the sight of the new-comer's dark looks, he added earnestly: 'By George! Carnac, I hope it's nothing serious. Nothing wrong, old boy?'

Lord Ulswater shook his head. 'There is nothing serious the matter; and I may say there is nothing wrong,' he made answer, in a voice that he vainly tried to render careless and joyous. 'But—you're a good fellow, Tregooze, and I do believe that if there were a screw loose, I might ask you to help me as confidently as any man in London, to say the least of it.'

'Try me when you like,' answered Tregooze, getting up from his place. 'I never make prosy speeches. But I should be a more ungrateful beggar than I am, Ulswater, if I did not recollect half a score of good turns that you have done me, first and last; so, if I can be of use, just say the word, and I shall not hang back, I promise you.'

Lord Ulswater stretched out his strong right hand, the hand that an hour or two before had beaten down Bendigo Bill upon the greasy pavement of Great Popplewell Street, and grasped the delicate white fingers of his studious friend. 'Thanks, Tregooze,' he said simply; and then added: 'Can't you do pretty much as you like, you Colonial Office magnificos, in Australia still—unofficially, I mean, of course?'

Mr Tregooze did not understand.

'I mean,' said the other hesitatingly—'can you not still get good information as to the character and conduct of conditionally liberated convicts? Could you not push a protégé, or, in case of need, put a spoke in the wheel of a badly-disposed fellow? The police, I believe, are very high-handed and influential at the antipodes. I have a reason for asking.'

'I see,' said Mr Tregooze slowly: 'no doubt, unofficially, we can do something. An official dispatch would set up the backs of the colonial functionaries, and cause the local press to bray out its wrath at our meddling propensities. But a quiet note—why, yes. What is it about?'

'It is Western Australia that I am thinking of. There is a convict there, one Sark, James Sark. I have reason to believe he means to take French-leave, and return home, which would be disagreeable to me, I frankly own, for reasons which, if you please, I will'—

'No, no reasons. Always avoid painful explanations!—Well, my dear Ulswater, I'll do it for you; for you, mind,—though, if the *Trumpet of Freedom* got hold of the story, I should be but a lost politician.—If Mr James Sark leaves Australia before the expiration of his legal sentence, I give you leave to put me in the pillory.—Good-night, old boy—good-night.'

PICTURES OF INDIA.

Books about India are written without end. They contain everything which the reader is supposed to be desirous of knowing. They are full of information. But somehow (I do not know whether you have felt it—I have) they fail to set before you that which you think you would first notice when you visited that country. Residents in India are so familiar with its common features, that they take for granted you know them too. Other writers dwell on finance, statistics, indigo, ryots, the old

Company, &c. and thus occupy themselves with matters which probably would come into no one's head when he made his first journey up the country.

No doubt, railways and the like have made a great change to the ordinary traveller. The locomotive levels distinctions. We suppose the inside of an express-train is much the same there as here. There is a place for your umbrella and small parcels in a net over your head. Engines whistle, tickets are collected, tunnels are dark, and the wind blows grit into your eyes and face when you sit fronting an open window. But railways must have, after all, made a very little outward difference in the face of the country. They have really made little here. You see the old place from the train, and suppose people go on much in the old way. In villages where there is a station, two or three porters in corduroy are added to the population; some neglected lane becomes a beaten road, along which wagons come with corn, and go away with coal; the country-folks get a trip somewhere by an excursion train once a year; but still the children will often cluster at the long white gate which bars the cross-road, or stand upon the bank, and hollo, as if the train were yet considered an external foreign thing, to be shouted at as a matter of course. They don't belong to it; they never travel by it; they don't clearly understand where it comes from, and where it goes to; and, on the whole, their old life is little affected by the very slight contact with the distant world which is caused by the Great Western or the Midland, as the case may be.

And I fancy the gulf between the railway and the wayside must be greater in India than in England. Easterns are slow to receive fresh impressions. They are aware of the presence of a foreign body, but express little surprise at it. People say this is because they have such command over their feelings. Possibly people may be wrong, and the truth may be that they say little because they feel little. At anyrate, the phenomenon of white men ruling over them can be but little intensified by anything which the white men do and bring. Easterns are in some respects like children, who accept the most startling results of science with small appreciation. It requires an education to be properly surprised. It is only your thoughtful men who are set thinking, and your learned men who learn.

Now, all this is a preamble to the expression of my belief that pictures of India twenty-five years old are, to all intents and purposes, as good now as ever; and it is on this account that I hail a book in which the writer fearlessly admits that she cares nothing for information, and yet lets you see through her eyes those little traits of eastern life which strike a sensible, simple-minded person.

I have long had a great desire to see India, and have turned over many volumes of writing about it with a sense that I was reading only the opinions other people had formed about the place, and these sometimes so grand and statesmanlike, that they did nothing towards helping me to a sight of the place itself. But when I opened the book *Up the Country*, I felt at once that I was with one who looked and told you what she was looking at; who listened, and told you what she heard—though with an avowed ignorance of Hindustani, and an expressed indifference even to the proper spelling of the sounds which represented the names of the

places she visited. Here, think I, is an intelligent ignoramus like myself; one who knows how little she knows, and is not afraid to enjoy herself, in proper disregard of all the regulations by which people are expected to look and talk.

It is difficult to convey the impression made in reading such a book as *Up the Country*, and yet I will pick a few sentences out of it, which will, I hope, induce some of my readers to read it for themselves. It makes no profession, teaches nothing, has no particular opinion, no crotchet, no purpose but that of seeing and pointing out to a friend, in a simple, pleasant way, what happened to go on before the writer's eyes. There is no adventure, no spirit of enterprise, no romance, no anything but the outside of India as it shewed itself to the writer. She did not like it; she was constantly counting the time when she could go home. She was bored by etiquette, bad roads, and hot suns; still, she looked and chatted. And after twenty-five years, her cheerful letters have seen the light in a book which will always be as fresh as on the day on which it was written.

Miss Eden was the sister of a governor-general, and travelled with an army. She assisted in entertaining generals and princes; still, she had a human, not an official eye, and simple people can look through it without being dazzled or shy.

My extracts need not come in any particular order, for you can open the book anywhere, and go on, or backwards, if you please, without any conscientious regret at having missed the thread of the narrative. Miss Eden travelled in great state; troops lined the road as they walked to the quay at Calcutta from Government House. This respect was received as a matter of course, 'though, I think,' she says, 'a long walk through troops presenting arms is trying to everybody.' Afterwards, they had thousands of soldiers and others about them; but at first they went up the river in steamers, and took a small retinue for convenience's sake. 'I think,' said the superintendent of the servants, 'Captain K— behaved very ill to us. He said that, between the steamers and the flat, he could lodge all the servants that were indispensably and absolutely necessary to us; so I only brought one hundred and forty; and now he says there is not room even for them.' The voyage up the river gives, as her experience of India, that it had 'the most picturesque population, with the ugliest scenery ever put together.'

Circumstances bring her into the society of rajahs and the like. In speaking of some who had never seen an English ball before, she says: 'They think the ladies who dance are utterly good-for-nothing, but seemed rather pleased to see so much vice.' That is satire which will fit a good many people beside native princes. We get some idea of the way in which these potentates heap riches on their own bodies, when we learn that, though the wages of the coolies who trudge about with boxes on their heads are about six shillings a month, a rajah will wear an ornament in his turban worth some six thousand or seven thousand pounds, to say nothing of other valuable properties about his person. But the native servants have a fine eye for good things, and apparently combine, with a humble manner, extraordinary impudence and a profound contempt for the rights of property. On one occasion, Miss Eden went with her brother to a state entertainment at a rajah's. The cloth laid down for them to walk on when

approaching their seats was of scarlet and gold, costing a pound a yard. Some of the servants who accompanied them were so over-tempted by it, that, she says, 'without the slightest respect for time or place, the instant we had walked over it, they snatched it up, and carried it off.' This was all the worse, as it seems it would have been a perquisite for the establishment. But the offenders were picked out, and discharged. The spot, however, was famous for thieves. It was here that Major B—, being encamped, had every scrap of his wife's clothes stolen while she was in bed, so that he had to sew her up in a blanket, and drive her to Benares for fresh things.

The hunting expeditions of the party were by no means always successful. One hears so much of tiger-shooting, &c. that it must have required a strong exercise of honesty, even in honest Miss Eden, to tell us that they turned out with 'huntsmen, and spearmen, and falconers in profusion, and twelve elephants, and five miles of open country; and the result was that they killed one innocent and unsuspecting black crow, and two tame paddy-birds, which one of the falconers quietly turned out. But it was a grand sight.'

I must pass by the description of the entertainments given by the king of Oude, noticing only two things: 'The throne is gold, with its canopy, and umbrella, and pillars covered with cloth of gold, embroidered in pearls and small rubies. Our fat friend, the prince, was dressed to match.' Afterwards, there was an illumination, with ill-spelt compliments in English, including: 'God save George Lord Auckland;' upon which a native attendant with pride asked Miss Eden afterwards: 'Did Ladyship see God save my Lord?'

As no doubt with all those who travel in India, or in any country where there is a striking contrast between the people and the visitor, our author passes from the comic to the tragic side of things with most natural simplicity. There is no straining after paradox in this. Children, who are the least self-conscious of us all, often mix their tears and smiles; and their emotion is always genuine. Miss Eden speaks of a famine: 'The dust at Cawnpore has been dreadful the last two days. People lose their way on the plains, and everything is full of dust—books, dinner, clothes, everything. We all detest Cawnpore. It is here, too, that we first came into the starving districts. They have had no rain for a year and a half; the cattle all died, and the people are all dying or gone away. Many who come from a distance die of the first food they touch. . . . G— and I walked down to the stables this morning before breakfast, and found such a miserable little baby, something like an old monkey, but with glazed, stupid eyes, under the care of another wretch of six years old. I am sure you would have sobbed to see the way in which the little atom flew at a cup of milk, and the way in which the little brother fed it.' She took charge of this child.

We hear much of the gigantic and seemingly almost impenetrable heathenism of India, and have a floating sort of notion that the creed of the Hindus, though notorious for its idols, is held by men who are subtle in thought and keen in argument; so much so, that they not unfrequently baffle Christian missionaries. Miss Eden feels frequently the strangeness of this position brought out by the small congregation on Sundays, in which a few English soldiers 'looked so respectable,'

while around them were twelve thousand souls obedient in everything save in this, which was of the highest moment. But the awe of this thought is sometimes rudely broken. She says in one place: 'This is an absurd country. Captain N— has a pet monkey, small and black, with a long white beard, and it sits at the door of his tent. It had not been here an hour when the durwar and the elders of the village came on deputation to say, that it was the first of that species which had ever been seen at Bareilly, and they begged to take it to their temple to worship it. He did not much like trusting it out of sight, but it was one of the requests which cannot be refused.'

What a touchy, incomprehensible fellow-subject we must have in the Hindu! This is either toleration which passes into ridiculous submissiveness, or profound offence. If the Hindus believed that the heretical captain was amusing himself with leading a god of theirs about as a plaything, teaching him tricks, and laughing at him, they might naturally feel deeply offended. If, on the other hand, they believed that the monkey was a mere monkey, and yet had a whim to exalt it, the captain, or the rule of the service which led him to lend his pet for such a purpose, was foolish. But such a request hints at the difficulty, if not impossibility, of the Englishman and Hindu being able to join issue at all on those social or religious matters which are the basis of mutual understanding and free intercourse between peoples.

The author of *Up the Country* frequently notices the curious relation in which the European stands to the native. An instance is given a page or two after the story of the divine monkey. The author is speaking of a corps of Irregular Horse. 'The regiment is made up of families. . . . They are never punished, but sent away if they commit any fault; and they will do anything for their chief if their prejudices of caste are respected. But there have been some horrible tragedies lately. . . . One young officer persuaded his uncle, Colonel E—, to order them to cut off their beards. . . . The instant they heard the order, they drew their swords, and cut him to pieces.' Observe, their beards were not cut off; but the mere expression of the thought that they should be touched with the scissors, caused these terrible warriors to kill their colonel on the spot. 'There was great difficulty in bringing the regiment into any order again.' And yet these men were docile almost beyond belief. The whole corps was commanded by two Europeans—only two, a major and a young adjutant. The major said that 'the officers came to him every morning, and sat down round him, and shewed him their Persian letters, and took his orders like children.' By this time, we may suppose that the regiment was in what was called 'order' again. But is not such 'order' really the deepest 'disorder'? Must there not be a wholly new and fresh action set up in such Indian society as produced these fierce and gentle soldiers? They are strange, 'disorderly,' out of gear with true humanity, not because they can be both fierce and gentle, but because they are so wholly removed from, and ignorant of, that power of learning new things, that sense of inquiry which is the real characteristic of mankind in its true position as intelligent creatures.

The effect of this curious and abnormal state of life is deeply felt by many Europeans, specially as they often have to live alone for long periods

among people so widely severed from them. Miss Eden tells us that Captain N— said, that 'towards the end of the rainy season, when the health generally gives way, the lowness of spirits that comes on is quite dreadful; that every young man fancies he is going to die, and then he thinks that nobody will bury him if he does, as there is no other European at hand. Never send a son to India, my dear M—.' That is her moral.

And now that suspicion is deepened by the Indian Mutiny, her 'moral' has lost none of its force. I should say, send them to India with fresh notions of tolerance, and another method of treating the natives. The author tells us of some instances in which an officer has gained a curious complicated sort of influence. There is the famous Captain Skinner, the father of 'Skinner's Horse.' He built a mosque and a church, and kept a native harem. 'His brother, Major Robert Skinner, was the same sort of melodramatic character, and made a tragic end. He suspected one of his wives of a slight *écart* from the path of propriety—very unjustly, it is said—but he called her and all his servants together, cut off the heads of every individual in his household, and then shot himself. His soldiers bought every article of his property at ten times its value, that they might possess relics of a man who had shewn, they said, such a quick sense of honour.'

The incessant sight of turbaned natives and their ways, was infinitely wearisome to our author. Speaking of some fakers at a great Sikh festival, she says: 'They never wear any clothes, but powder themselves all over with white or yellow powder, and put red streaks over their faces—like raw materials of so many Grimaldis.'

A large portion of the book is taken up with the description of Simla and the Hill Country, which proved a Siberia to the natives from Calcutta. We have also much about old Runjeet Singh, who was 'exactly like an old mouse, with gray whiskers and one eye.' I leave the readers of the book to find out what she has to say about him, remarking only one trait in his character. The English doctor's things were once stolen, and she congratulates the courtiers of Runjeet at the thieves having cut the stomach-pump to pieces. When it got into his hands, 'how they would have been pumped.' Runjeet 'tried all medical experiments on the people about him.'

One of the chief characters in the book is Miss Eden's dog 'Chance.' On one occasion she had the present of a little elephant, which was set apart for him to ride (he had two servants already), 'for,' she says, 'a youthful elephant is the sort of thing Runjeet's dogs will expect,' when Chance pays his respects along with his mistress. 'It just,' she says, 'comes up to my elbow, seems to have Chance's own little bad temper, and his love of eating, and is altogether rather like him.'

Runjeet Singh must have been a grand fellow. I keep coming on fresh notices and reminiscences of him as I go through the book, and so record another remark, though I had referred the reader to the book itself. 'To return to the show. We drove for two miles and a half through a lane of Runjeet's body-guard. The sun was up and shining on them, and I suppose there was not one who would not have made the fortune of a painter. . . . In the distance, there was a long line of troops extending four miles and a half, and which, after much deliberation, I settled was a white wall with

red coping. I thought it could not possibly be alive.

Runjeet asked Lord Auckland *why* he had no wife. He replied, that only one was allowed in England, and if she turned out a bad one, he could not easily get rid of her. Runjeet said this was a bad custom; that the Sikhs were allowed twenty-five wives, and they did not dare to be bad, because their husbands could beat them if they were. Lord Auckland replied, 'that was an excellent custom, and he would try to introduce it when he got home.' Now, was this taken in jest or earnest? Runjeet was a great drinker, and defended drunkenness on first principles. Once, however, being naturally curious, he expressed a desire to know something about the Christian religion. The chaplain shewed him, among other things, a translation of the Ten Commandments, 'almost all of which,' says Miss Eden, 'must have been a puzzle, from the not worshipping graven images, down to not coveting his neighbour's goods.' Before old Runjeet died, he parted with a large number of his jewels, to pay for the prayers of the native priests. But no one seems to have ventured to tell him seriously anything about the Christian faith. The European kept himself, in this matter, wholly apart from the native.

Miss Eden is eloquent on the native insects. Writing to a friend, she says: 'The only misfortune of my room is that a long insect, much resembling a gudgeon on six legs, has eaten up your picture-frame; the picture I took with me in my writing-desk, knowing that the gudgeon would have eaten that forthwith, but the frame, in an unguarded moment, I trusted to his honour, and this is the result.'

There are throughout the book constant prophetic hints of a mutiny. In one place, she says: 'Twenty-two years ago, no European had ever been here, and there we were, with the band playing the *Puritani*, and eating salmon from Scotland, and sardines from the Mediterranean, and observing that some of the ladies' sleeves were too tight, according to the overland fashions for March, &c.; and all this in the face of those high hills, some of which have remained untrampled since the creation, and we one hundred and five Europeans being surrounded by at least three thousand mountaineers, who, wrapped up in their hill-blankets, looked at what we call our polite amusements, and bowed to the ground if a European came near them. I sometimes wonder they do not cut all our heads off, and say nothing about it.' They tried, and failed.

I could go on giving you extracts without end. Nothing has made me realise India like this book. The largeness of the people's selfishness; the smallness of their little people, the greatness of their great ones; their crystallised civilisation; their grandeur, dirt, riches, poverty; the flatness of their plains; the height of their mountains; the ceaseless contrast between the handful of white-faced rulers and the crowds of jewelled subjects who bow before them; the blunders, the success of the dominant European, leave an impression which keeps alive the problem of our Eastern rule.

I will end with one scene. 'In the centre of the court, a large sort of chessboard is laid out in squares of marble, and there is a raised seat on which Akbar sat, and played the games; the *pieces* were all female slaves, splendidly dressed, and whoever won, carried off the sixteen ladies!'

AN ISLAND FARMER'S FANCY.

THE heat of the sun fell down, fell down—
The heat of the sun fell down on me,
As I shaded my eyes with a trembling hand,
And gazed through the haze at the sea.

And the sea it shimmered, and lifted, and fell,
All brightly blue; till the swell of the wave
Broke down on the sands into foam-floods white,
That weltered by crag and by cave.

From the sunny shallows it deepened down—
Gathering evermore deep and dark—
Till it changed to a shuddering vast Profound,
The home of the whale and the shark.

On the dizzy ledge of the hoary cliff
The sea-birds fluttered in restless flocks,
And their piercing shriek and their plaintive cry
Rang sharp through the air from the rocks.

The land-wind, scented with thyme and heath,
Flowed down from the moor to the edge of the bay,
And mixed with the dense salt-breaths that clung
Where the shells and the sea-weed lay.

Far out where the sky swept down to the sea,
And the sea swept smoothly up to the sky,
Were the Doors of Space that are backward hung
To the ships when the winds are high.

In the bay below, swung a summer boat,
With a helm, and a flag, and a tiny sail;
But all unfit for the wrestling rush
Of the surge and the strength of the gale.

I dropped my hand to my reaping-hook—
How mournful the sea-birds cried in my ears!—
I gathered my corn in the sweat of my brow,
And moistened my bread with my tears.

But I thought of a Land that lies far away
As true in the dawn as it is in the dream;
Where the fruit and the flowers, the rest and the love,
Are all that they ever seem—

A Land where the breath, now drawn and spent
In toil on these fields salt-strewn by the blast,
Might have time to stay in a bosom that swelled
With satisfied wonder at last.

The heat of the sun fell down, fell down,
And it smote on the field, and the cliff, and the sea,
But I thought of a Ship with shadowing wings,
That will some day call for me.

And then to sail past the Doors of the Flood,
O'er a narrowing sea to a rising shore,
Till the prow runs up on the golden sand,
And Life shall know Labour no more.

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Printed and Published by W. & R. CHAMBERS, 47 Paternoster Row, LONDON, and 339 High Street, EDINBURGH. Also sold by all Booksellers.